

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 8 and amend the remaining claims as follows.

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1. (Original) A trace having a multiple-entry, single exit architecture.
2. (Original) The trace of claim 1, wherein the trace is a complex trace having multiple independent prefixes and a common, shared suffix.
3. (Original) The trace of claim 1, wherein the trace is indexed by an address of a terminal instruction therein.
4. (Currently amended) A front-end system for a processor, comprising:
an instruction cache system;
an extended block cache system, comprising:
a fill unit provided in communication with the instruction cache system,
a block cache, and
a block predictor to store masks associated with complex blocks, the masks distinguishing block prefixes from each other; and
a selector coupled to the output of the instruction cache system and to an output of the block cache.
5. (Original) The front-end system of claim 4, wherein the extended block cache system further comprises a block predictor provided in communication with the fill unit and the block cache.
6. (Currently amended) The front-end system of claim 4, wherein the block cache is to store blocks traces having a multiple-entry, single exit architecture.
7. (Currently amended) The front-end system of claim 4, wherein the block cache is to store complex blocks traces having multiple independent prefixes and a common suffix.
8. Canceled.
9. (Original) A method of managing extended blocks, comprising:
predicting an address of a terminal instruction of an extended block to be used,

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determining whether the predicted address matches an address of a terminal instruction of a previously created extended block, and

selecting one of the extended block in the event of a match.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising creating a new extended block when there is no match.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the creating comprises:
receiving new instructions until a terminal condition occurs,
assembling the new instructions into an extended block,
determining whether an address of a terminal instruction in the new block matches an address of a terminal instruction of a pre-existing block, and
unless a match occurs, storing the new block in a memory.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the storing comprises, when an older block causes a match, storing the new block over the old block in a memory if the old block is subsumed within the new block.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the storing comprises, when an older block causes a match, dropping the new block if the new block is subsumed within the older block.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the storing comprises, when an older block causes a match, creating a complex block if the new block and the older block share a common suffix but include different prefixes.

15. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising outputting instructions of the selected block for execution.

16. (Currently amended) A processing engine, comprising:
a front end stage to store blocks of instructions in a multiple-entry, single exit traces architecture when considered according to program flow, and
an execution unit in communication with the front end stage.

17. (Original) The processing engine of claim 16, wherein the front-end stage comprises:
an instruction cache system,
an extended block cache system, comprising:

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a fill unit provided in communication with the instruction cache system,
a block cache, and
a selector coupled to the output of the instruction cache system and to an output of the
block cache.

18. (Original) The processing engine of claim 17, wherein the block cache is to store the
multiple-entry, single exit traces.

19. (Original) The processing engine of claim 17, wherein the extended block cache system
further comprises a block predictor provided in communication with the fill unit and the block
cache.

[Please add the following new claims:]

20. (New) A trace, comprising a sequence of program instructions stored together as a
contiguous unit, the instructions defining a program flow that progresses from any instruction
therein to a last instruction in the trace and in which the trace has multiple separate prefixes.

21. (New) The trace of claim 20, wherein the trace is a complex trace having multiple
independent prefixes and a common, shared suffix.

22. (New) The trace of claim 20, wherein the trace is indexed by an address of a terminal
instruction therein.

23. (New) A memory comprising storage for a plurality of traces and means for indexing
the traces by an address of a last instruction therein according to program flow.

24. (New) The memory of claim 23, wherein the traces include a plurality of instructions
assembled according to program flow.

25. (New) The memory of claim 24, wherein the traces have a multiple entry, single exit
architecture.

26. (New) The memory of claim 24, wherein at least one trace has separate prefixes and a
common suffix, when considered according to program flow.

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27. (New) The memory of claim 24, wherein at least one trace includes at least three segments of executable instructions in which, when considered according to program flow, first and second segments are mutually exclusive of each other and lead into the third segment.